



THE BEACON

DECEMBER 2021

IN WORSHIP

Sundays, December 5 - December 26

Advent is an invitation. For many, it is the invitation to get into that Christmas spirit, to count down the days to the grand celebration, and let the holiday transform everything around us. We're not all about Christmas, the holiday, about December 25 with all the jingle bells and tinsel. We are about Christmas, the Mass of Christ, the celebration of the Incarnate one who comes to remind us that we are not alone, and God is with us. We are about the longing for the coming kin-dom, where we will study war no more, where people will walk in the light, where joy will be found, and love will be the tie that binds us together. That's the home for which we long. That's the invitation this Advent season to your church and the world: "Come home for Christmas."

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FOLLOW US:



The Joy of Christmas - A Christmas Concert at Living Word

"Born to reign in us forever, born to set his people free,
Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart."

The message of Christmas is truly a message of joy! As we celebrate this Advent season, I hope you will join us as we share in the Joy of Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 19, at 7:00 pm. The concert will feature youth and adult small ensembles, along with the Worship Choir and live orchestra. Childcare will be available for ages four and under.

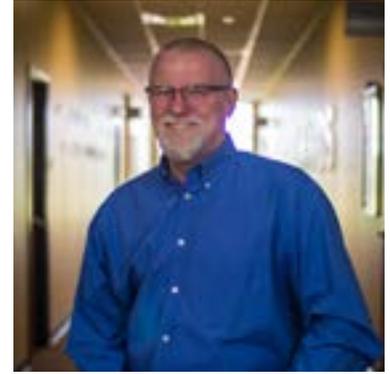
God has blessed us with the wonderful gift of Jesus Christ, our Lord. May we share His love with others so that they may come to know the joy of loving Him.

Donna Baker, Director of Traditional Worship

PASTOR'S PEN

Miracle Offering

At its inception, the purpose of the Christmas Miracle Offering was to create life transformation for people we may never meet. In the beginning those people were nameless, faceless residents of an area you only knew as "Northern Ghana." Today you know them as residents of a state called the Upper East Region. You've come to know them as the citizens of towns like Bolgatanga, Novrongo, Paga, Sandema, and Wiaga. You know their pastors as Pastor Francis (who has moved to the eastern side of the country) and Pastor Joachim as well as others. You know them as the those who live in the village of Yagzuri, where Living Word dug our first borehole well. So impressed were they by the love you extended them that they named their church after you, "Living Word." In the years since that first well, nearly \$2 million has been contributed to dig wells, provide sanitation systems, and build churches and schools. Lives have been transformed in Ghana because you have been generous.



In 2018 the Miracle Offering was expanded to help Living Word partner with local missions as well. The goal is still to transform lives; but now doing so closer to home. Books for schools, a van and walk-in freezer for a food pantry, and many other projects have been undertaken so that lives in the St. Louis area can experience transformation as well. The full story would take much longer to read but be assured that the homeless, visitors to our medical facilities in the area, children with disabling conditions, and others have benefited from ministries offered by local organizations with whom you've partnered to offer care.

The 2021 Miracle Offering this year will be no different. Four areas of focus will make up our offering distribution and partnership organizations for 2022. Our International Focus will continue the work for which the Miracle Offering was begun with water and sanitation being the central effort in Ghana. Additionally, we will focus on issues around Literacy, Food Insecurity and Homelessness.

Our concern for Literacy will continue to be addressed by the work we do at Meramec Elementary School. We will continue to employ Shannon Fritts, our Reading Specialist. Shannon's position is unique among most church employees in the nation. Shannon functions more like a missionary in that she takes her reading expertise and empowers both students and Living Word Reading Volunteers to assist students in elementary grades to come up to reading level. We are told that, barring any additional surge in COVID, we will be able to send volunteers to read after the first of January. We do so much more with Meramec School through our additional volunteer and support roles. We will share more with you as we have details.

Circle of Concern has been our go to mission to partner with on Food Insecurity for families residing in Rockwood, Parkway, and Valley Park School Districts. Circle provides a food pantry as well as job training and resume' writing, and other assistance that the unemployed and underemployed of our area need. During October Living Word hosted both a 5K Fun Run and a Thanksgiving Food Box packing event. Circle is a professionally run and efficient mission, and it is a joy to partner with them.

Finally, we continue our relationship with Room at The Inn. Room is a mission that assists individuals and families in moving from homelessness to self-sufficiency. In years past Living Word hosted these guests overnight once a month; providing showers, meals, and a place to sleep. This ministry was interrupted by COVID and over the past year and a half the clients stayed at the offices of Room in Bridgeton. We even helped upgrade their heating and cooling system to make that shift more comfortable. As we emerge from the pandemic, Room intends to move to a hybrid in which some of their clients stay overnight in churches while others stay in their newly renovated facilities. This will allow us to once again show radical hospitality to the stranger living among us.

Jesus said "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you comforted me, in prison and you visited me." When He was asked when we had ever done such things He responded, "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me." Truly, your gift to the Living Word Miracle Offering on Christmas Eve empowers you to make a very real difference in the lives of those whom Jesus loves so dearly.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Dave

disrael@livingwordumc.org

HavenHouse Welcome Bag Program

Living Word is partnering with HavenHouse to provide 100 Welcome Bags to families who have traveled to St. Louis for medical care. The Welcome Bag Program supplies families with goodies, activities, and care items to help them and perhaps ease their stress. While you are shopping during the holidays, please consider picking up some items for the Welcome Bags. Please bring new items to Living Word by December 19. If you have any questions, contact Beth Balzraine at bbalzraine@livingwordumc.org.

HavenHouse Welcome Bag List

Individually wrapped snack items
(including gluten-free, dairy-free, & nut-free)

Children's Activities

- Coloring books
- Word searches
- Crossword puzzles
- Mad Libs
- Card games
- Seek & Find puzzles

Adult Activities

- Puzzle Books
- Sudoku
- Adult Coloring Books
- Brain Teaser Puzzles

Additional Items

- Hand sanitizer
- Chapstick
- Hand lotion
- Winter gloves
- Travel Tissues

STAFF UPDATE



Amy Tinker

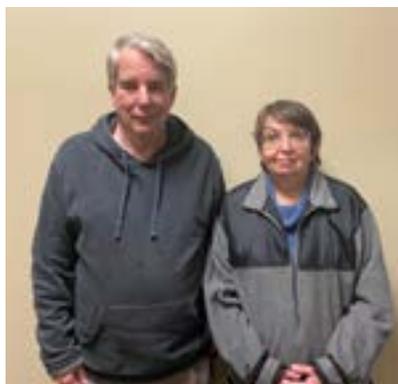
We welcome Amy Tinker to the Living Word staff who began on November 29 as Administrative Assistant to the Lead Pastor. She will also provide administrative assistance to the Directors of Communications, Congregational Care, and Music Ministries. Amy is from Fenton, Missouri where she was born and raised. Before Living Word, Amy worked as a paralegal for 15 years. She has 3 children, Saturn, Trent, and Lucy. Amy enjoys hiking, camping, floating, gardening, and spending time with her kids.



Samantha Yoder

It is with sadness that we announce that Samantha Yoder has resigned from her position as the Living Word Director of NextGen Ministries. Samantha has accepted a position as the Director of Connections at the Webster Groves campus of The Gathering UMC. Please be sure to thank her for her 15 months of service at Living Word before her last day on Sunday, December 5.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS



Bill and Rose Grossenheider

We welcome Bill and Rose Grossenheider into church membership. Bill and Rose are both retired. Bill enjoys being a handy man and they both enjoy camping. Bill is involved in Wesley Ringers handbell ensemble.



Austin Timothy Moore

We celebrated the baptism of Austin Timothy Moore on November 14. Austin is the son of Tim and Adria Moore and the grandson of Bill and Kim Renken.

Giving Thanks

AT YEAR'S END 2021

Thank you for your support of the ministries of Living Word throughout this year. Please note that all contributions for 2021 must be postmarked by Dec. 31st or received in the church office by 12:00 Noon on Dec. 30th (last day of 2021 business for the church) to be posted as a 2021 gift. To confirm the balance of your 2021 pledge please contact Kim Cox at kcox@livingwordumc.org or 636-821-2800.

2021 CHECKLIST

Will you itemize?

In 2021, if all your qualifying charitable gifts, taxes paid, and mortgage interest exceed the standard deduction, then itemizing deductions will save on taxes.

Remember:

- ◆ Charitable gifts must be completed by Dec. 31 to be deducted this year.
- ◆ For gifts of cash you may elect to deduct up to 100% of adjusted gross income (AGI).
- ◆ A gift of appreciated stock preserves cash and avoids capital gains tax.
- ◆ Consider prepaying your 2022 gifts to boost deductions. Itemize every other year.
- ◆ Create a Donor Advised Fund to manage deductions and all of your charitable giving.

Non-Itemizers

- ◆ Special COVID Deduction: Up to \$300 in cash gifts to charity can be deducted in addition to the Standard Deduction without itemizing. (\$600 for joint filers)
- ◆ IRA ROLLOVER GIFT: If you have a required minimum distribution (RMD) on your IRA, you can authorize direct gifts from your IRA to your church. You avoid the income, and the distribution counts toward your RMD.

Preferred Giving

Living Word encourages you to give online at www.livingwordumc.org through a secure giving platform.

With the new year just around the corner why not consider starting a new routine that SIMPLIFIES your life!! The secure giving platform allows you to set up recurring donations or make one time gifts and allows you to set up your contributions however you desire, weekly, monthly etc... using a credit card, debit card, or bank account.

Your Generosity Can be Given in Many Ways

Living Word Church realizes that your thoughtful gifts are received in many shapes and sizes.

Your typical charitable gifts can be given by cash, check, or credit card. Did you know that you can include Living Word in your Will or Estate plan? Did you know that you can create a gift annuity, make a charitable IRA rollover, use a Donor Advised Fund, transfer stock, bonds or mutual funds?

If you would like more information on these charitable options please contact Kim Cox at kcox@livingwordumc.org or 636-821-2800 or pick up a brochure on the options from Kim's office.

PLAN AHEAD GIFTS

A Charitable Gift Annuity

Create a CGA at the MUMF Foundation. You get annual fixed payments for life and tax savings. Your church or favorite UM charity receives the remainder. Very attractive rates for persons over 60 seeking stable retirement income.

Donor Advised Fund

Manage all your charitable giving through a MUMF DAF. Donate to your fund anytime and decide later which charities receive distributions.

Remember Your Church

Remember your church with the gift of a lifetime through your will, living trust or other estate plan.

Beneficiary Designations

Name your church as the beneficiary of an IRA, an insurance policy or other assets. This is an easy way to include the church in your plans.

A "Forever" Gift

Contribute to Living Word's endowment that will ensure sustaining income to your church—and a living memorial.

NEXTGEN MINISTRIES



LW Youth Carols and Cocoa

LW Youth will be traveling around the area and caroling on Sunday, December 12. They will take a break halfway and enjoy some hot cocoa and treats! The youth will meet at Living Word at 2:00 pm and return at 5:00 pm. Register by 12/8. If you have any questions, please contact Donna Baker, Director of Traditional Music, at dbaker@livingwordumc.org or Mark Turner, Director of Great Awakening Choir at mturner@livingwordumc.org.

Parents' Night Out

We are excited to offer Parents' Night Out! Enjoy a date night without having to hire a sitter. Each family that registers will receive a family package from Living Word. This event is for families with kids from birth – 5th grade. Register at livingwordumc.org/parentsnightout by 12/3. If you have any questions, contact Greg Finfrock, Executive Pastor at gfinfrock@livingwordumc.org.



LW Youth did a great job raking leaves on November 21!



It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas

This season is filled with so many plans and words. We want to pause and focus on the important words during this Advent season; Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. These words appear everywhere as we countdown to the birth of a Savior—a savior who promises that even in this imperfect world we can experience and embody hope, peace, joy and love; even here and now in the chaos of life. LW Youth will explore this topic on Sunday mornings. Doors open at 8:45 am. Study begins at 9:30 am.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Please hold the following individuals in your personal prayers. To add a prayer to the list below or to stay on the prayer list for more than two weeks, please complete the online form at livingwordumc.org/mylw, or email Val Novatny, Director of Congregational Care, at vnovatny@livingwordumc.org. For pre-surgery prayer, please contact Val Novatny at vnovatny@livingwordumc.org or 636-821-2823. Emergency Congregational Care 24/7 On-Call Phone: 636-821-2888.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Trincy Cater	Karen Patton	Sophia Miller
George Cater	Josh Luter	Judy Hoffman
Nancy Davis	Charlotte Ottley	Nini Schneider
Jerry Primm	Bill Reichter	
Mitch Mitchell	Bob Vincent	

The Dickinson family on the loss of Steve Dickinson's wife,
Mary Dickinson

Victims and their families of the Waukesha Wisconsin Christmas parade tragedy

FOR MORE PRAYER INFORMATION:

livingwordumc.org/care

TO HAVE CARDS SENT:

livingwordumc.org/care

TO ADD A PERSON TO THE PRAYER LIST:

livingwordumc.org/mylw

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Grieving?

Know someone who is?

When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Our **Surviving the Holidays** seminar helps participants prepare for the holidays and even discover hope for the future.

SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

Sunday, December 5, 11:45 am - 1:45 pm

Lunch will be provided.

Please register at:

www.livingwordumc.org/holidays



Call today for more information
636-821-2800

Sponsored by Living Word Church
17315 Manchester Rd, Wildwood, MO

Surviving the Holidays - a GriefShare Event

Bittersweet memories. Loss of traditions. An empty seat at the table. The holiday season can trigger sadness and despair for people grieving a loss. Join us on Sunday, December 5 from 11:45 am - 1:45 pm for Surviving the Holidays where we talk about how to deal with grief around the holiday season. Lunch is provided. Contact Val Novatny, Director of Congregational Care, at vnovatny@livingwordumc.org for more information or sign-up at livingwordumc.org/holidays.

Living Word is Recruiting for Stephen Ministry

Every day you see people who are dealing with difficult times. Stephen Ministers are God's representatives who bring his love to those who are hurting. God is waiting to make a difference in their lives through you!



You have seen the ministry of the Stephen Ministers here at Living Word for well over 20 years. Have you thought that perhaps you would like to participate in this ministry? The next Stephen Minister training class will begin on Thursday, January 27 and continue to May 26. If you would like to participate in this training and in this ministry, talk to Carol Baum (Stephen Ministry Leader), 314-330-0017 or baumr17@gmail.com or Val Novatny, 636-821-2823 or vnovatny@livingwordumc.org.

Or, to learn more about becoming a Stephen Minister, please visit this link:

<https://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/1596>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



Living Word is participating in the Wildwood Snowman Search from November 30 - December 31. Stop by participating Wildwood businesses, take a selfie, and upload your photos with #WildwoodSnowmanSearch in your post, for a chance to win a cash prize! For more information and the list of participating businesses visit livingwordumc.org/news.

Save the Date

November 30 - December 31 - Wildwood Snowman Search
December 1 - 20 - HavenHouse Welcome Bag Item Collection at Living Word
December 4 - Wildwood Tree Lighting 4:00 - 7:00 pm
December 5 - Confirmation Meeting 11:45 am
December 5 - Surviving the Holidays - a GriefShare Event 11:45 am
December 10 - Parents' Night Out 6:00 pm
December 12 - LW Youth Carols and Cocoa 2:00 pm
December 19 - The Joy of Christmas Concert at 7:00 pm
December 24 - Christmas Eve Services at Living Word
5:00 pm - Contemporary Candlelight Service
7:00 pm - Traditional Candlelight Service
Visit livingwordumc.org/news for more information or contact the church office at 636-821-2800.

Worship Attendance

November 7 : in-person - 240, online - 241
November 14: in-person - 232, online - 256
November 21: in-person - 221, online - 213
November 28: in-person - 229, online - 202

December Senior Social Luncheon and Mission Opportunity

December's Senior Social Luncheon will be another "working lunch" on Tuesday, December 14 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. After our meal together, we will be assembling "Warming Buddies" to be used for our visitation ministry. This will entail simple machine sewing, ironing, filling, and tying on tags. Join us! If you have any questions, please ask Val Novatny, vnovatny@livingwordumc.org.

Senior Adult Bible Study

Join Pastor Greg for Bible study for senior adults on Tuesday mornings. This class will be a 12-week study of The Letter to the Romans, running through January 25, with the week off between Christmas and New Year's. The class will meet from 11:00 am to noon on Tuesday mornings. Please note that this is a change from the start time of 10:30 am from the previous class!

Save the Date!

Registration for Living Word Early Childhood Center
Living Word ECC will begin registration for the 2022-23 school year in January. Please call the office (636-821-2861) to set up a tour and for specific dates and information regarding registration. Visit livingwordumc.org/ecc for more information on the program and class offerings.

Wildwood Tree Lighting & Volunteer Opportunity

On Saturday, December 4, Living Word is participating in the Wildwood Tree Lighting from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at the Wildwood Town Plaza. Meet Santa, roast s'mores, listen to carolers, and shop local vendor booths. Living Word will have a booth and is sponsoring the children's crafts so come on out and enjoy a night of hometown fun! If you would like to volunteer at the Living Word or craft booth, email Beth Balzaine at bbalzaine@livingwordumc.org.

Living Word Giving

There are many ways to give to Living Word! Visit livingwordumc.org/giving, login to the ShelbyNEXT app, or text 636-306-4111. Contact the church office if you need assistance at 636-821-2800.

NOVEMBER AT LIVING WORD



Senior Social assembled homeless care kits from donations from the LW Congregation!



The Christmas spirit was brought to the church by some very special Living Word elves!



Living Word collected 2910 items for the Circle of Concern Thanksgiving Boxes. The LW kids and youth assembled the boxes. Thank you Living Word Community!